

Lose Weight Forever

# 50 Habits of "Naturally Thin" People

BY CYNTHIA DERMODY

**T**HIS IS NOT A DIET—or a rigorous exercise program. (Nobody can stick to those for long.) Instead, it's a simple way to make weight loss a natural part of the life you already live. And guess what? It's fun! You don't

have to give up the foods you love or join a gym. It's about balancing calories in tiny ways that add up to big benefits. You just adopt some tricks naturally lean people do. Pick the ones you like, stick with them, and you'll slim down and tone up—for good!

## How to Get Started

Decide how much you want to lose and see how many calories a day it will take to make it happen by year's end. Then, work into your routines however many of these eating tweaks and exercises (it's important to do both) you need to achieve your goal:

- Slash a total of 100 calories each day to lose

about 10 pounds in a year.

- Slash 250 calories a day to lose about 25 pounds.
- Slash 500 calories a day to lose about 50 pounds.

This is based on a 150-pound person; you may need to cut more or fewer calories, depending on your weight, age and gender. It also assumes your normal calorie intake es-

entially stays the same (you're not overeating today, running a marathon tomorrow) and your weight is stable. For instance, a 140-pound woman eats about 2,100 calories a day to maintain her current weight; a 210-pound man needs 3,150 daily to keep the scale steady. Now read on and start losing!

## Morning Makeover

**1 Wake-up workout** When your eyes open, sit up slowly without using your hands. With legs straight out, lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch in your back and hamstrings. Hold; then, using your abs, lower yourself flat. Rest and repeat two more times. Strengthens core. **Burns 10**

**2 Go for the grains** Not ready for Twigs & Rocks cereal? Sprinkle on a few tablespoons of wheat germ or oat bran. Work up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of low-sugar whole-grain cereal with at least three grams of fiber per serving, and you'll pass on that Danish. **Saves 100**

**3 Add some protein** The more you eat earlier on, the less you eat as the day wears on, research has shown. So after your cereal, add a hard-boiled egg or a part-skim mozzarella cheese stick to keep you feeling full—and away from that pre-lunch brownie. **Saves 200** (or more)

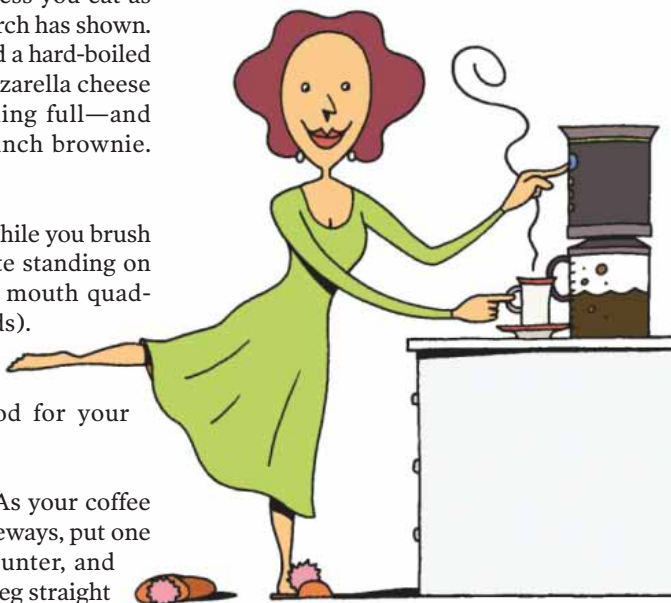
**4 Balance booster** While you brush your teeth, alternate standing on one leg as you switch mouth quadrants (every 30 seconds). Balancing develops your core muscles and may even be good for your brain. **Burns 10**

**5 Be a ballerina** As your coffee drips, stand sideways, put one hand on the counter, and lift the outside leg straight

out in front of you, keeping it extended. With upper body straight, hold for a few seconds and move it to the side; hold and extend it behind you. Do five to ten times on each leg. Tones outer thighs, hip flexors and quadriceps. **Burns 10**

**6 Coffee saver** Instead of pouring that  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of half-and-half (a whopping 105 calories!) into your mug, replace it with the same amount of 2% milk. **Saves 60**

**7 Better your bagel** You can walk 10,000 steps to justify your 500-calorie bagel with cream cheese, or try this: low-fat spreadable cheese like Laughing Cow Light on an English muffin. **Saves 300**



## Nine-to-Five Fixes

**8** **Tone in traffic** Use the time spent bumper-to-bumper to develop your buns of steel: Squeeze your derriere each time you tap the brake, holding for 10 seconds. Shoot for 10 to 15 squeezes a trip. **Burns 10**

**9** **Snack smarter** Portion out the day's snacks into pint-size zip bags, or buy single-serving portions. For example, four regular Oreos have 200 calories versus the 100-calorie snack bag version. Go for the lower fat chips: a Lay's Light bag has only 75 calories, while the regular has 150. **Saves 175** (over two snacks)

**10** **Casual day payoff** You will blast more calories during the day wearing comfy clothes like jeans or khakis, sport shirts and soft-soled shoes than donning constricting suits, skirts and heels. Why?

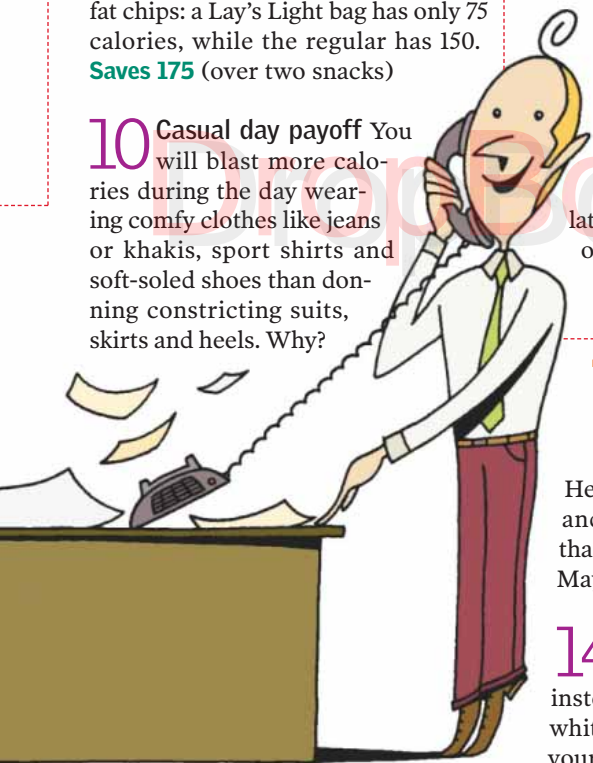
Because you walk more, a study found. Now you just have to convince the boss. **Burns 25**

**11** **You know squat!** At your desk chair, pretend you're going to sit but don't—stop and come back up without using your arms. Always start squats by lowering your hips, not bending knees forward, and keeping your weight on your heels. Repeat the motion throughout the day (even at the potty!) for 15 to 20 total. Strengthens quadriceps. **Burns 15**

**12** **Switch your soda** Your body doesn't register calories from liquids the same way it does those from foods, so you won't get those "stop eating" signals to help you compensate for the overload later on. Change from two glasses of regular soda or fruit juice to diet soda or a flavored seltzer. **Saves 300**

**13** **Talk it UP** Every time you grab the phone, stand up and pace around. Heavy people sit on average two and a half hours more per day than thin people, according to the Mayo Clinic. **Burns 50 or more**

**14** **At lunch, pick a pita** Use one mini whole-wheat pita instead of the usual two slices of white or refined wheat bread for your sandwich. **Saves 70**





**15** **Get face time** We use e-mail so much we've forgotten what our co-workers look like. Pick a colleague or two who sits farthest from you and deliver 10 of those daily messages in person. And go out of your way: Hit a bathroom or a copier on another floor—and take the stairs, of course.

**Burns 100**

**16** **Firm as you file** Pause from your papers with a few wall push-ups. Place hands wide at shoulder height against the wall. Take a couple of steps back so your body is at a slight angle and your weight is on your toes, and do three sets of 10 push-ups. Strengthens chest and triceps. (For more desk exercises, go to [changeone.com/workout](http://changeone.com/workout).) **Burns 10**

**17** **An apple (or more) a day** They're packed with fiber and water, so your stomach will want less. Plus, studies out of Washington State and Brazil have shown that people who eat at least three apples or pears a day lose weight. Try two small apples and two fewer large cookies. **Saves 100**

**18** **Try a simple chair workout • Dips:** If your chair has wheels, brace it against something. Facing forward, place palms on the front edge of the seat with knees bent at a right angle. Lower butt toward the floor; raise and repeat for two sets of 10. Tones triceps. **Burns 10**

• **Lifts:** Seated in a chair with your back straight and your feet on the floor, squeeze knees together and gently bring them toward your chest. Do two sets of ten. Strengthens abdominals.

**Burns 10**

## Outsmart the Scale

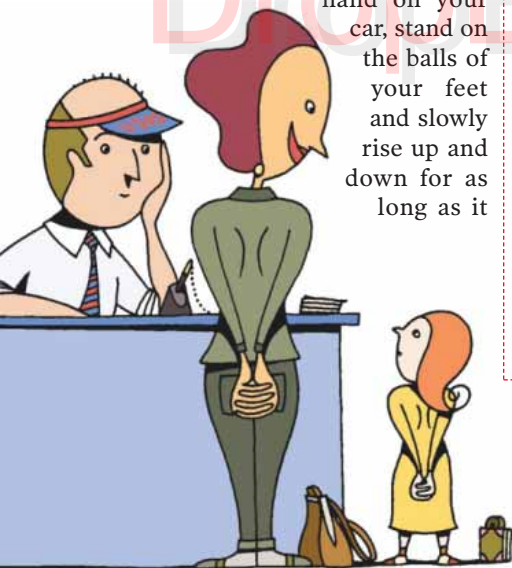
You might be tempted to jump on the scale after the first few days to see if you've lost. Don't! With this long-term approach, you may not see the digits decrease right away. This is fine—you're losing slowly, the way you should. Weigh in weekly if you want, but don't obsess. If your jeans get looser, you know you're doing great. The best way to track your progress is to pay attention to how you feel: Do you have less pain, more energy? Are you in a better mood? That's what counts.

## Around Town

**19** Carry some weight When you're grocery shopping or running errands, wear a backpack with a 5- or 10-pound bag of sugar inside to increase resistance and burn more calories. Add purchases to your load as it becomes easier. **Burns 20** (for an hour of errands)

**20** Tweak your treat Instead of a large caffè latte and a chocolate cream-cheese muffin, get a small nonfat latte and a small low-fat raisin or carrot muffin. **Saves 340**

**21** Pump at the pump Instead of fuming over gas prices, think about firming your calves: With one hand on your car, stand on the balls of your feet and slowly rise up and down for as long as it



takes your tank to fill—for an SUV that might be 50 raises! **Burns 10**

**22** Do the pizza pat Blot your slice with a napkin to cut anywhere from a teaspoon to a tablespoon of grease—and calories. **Saves 50-100**

**23** Shop till the pounds drop At the mall, try on at least ten outfits, both pants and shirts. No need to buy! **Burns 60**

**24** Eat like a kid You don't have to give up that quick lunch if you order smaller portions: Instead of a Quarter Pounder with Cheese and large fries, opt for the cheeseburger Happy Meal. You can even play with the toy. **Saves 390**

**25** Recharge yourself Anytime you're waiting in line, stand evenly on both feet, clasp hands behind your back and squeeze shoulder blades together to open your chest, an energizing yoga-based move that stimulates the nervous system. Hold for 10 to 20 seconds while slowly breathing in and out, taking longer on the inhale. **Burns 5**

## On the Home Front

**26** Jog for junk mail Turn clutter into a challenge: For every piece of junk mail you pull from the mailbox each day, do one lap around your house or building, or up and down a flight of stairs. **Burns 35-140**

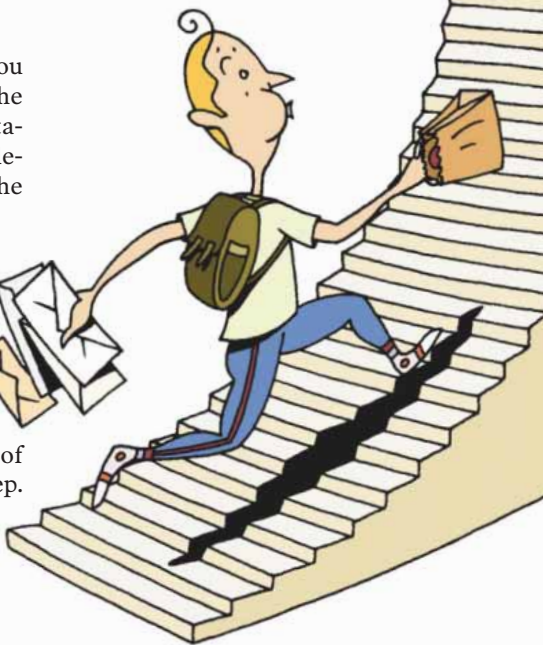
**27** **Use better butter** No, you don't have to give up the real deal—instead of a tablespoon of stick butter, use a tablespoon of whipped and cut half the calories. **Saves 30**

**28** **Step on it** Before you lug those backpacks upstairs, stop and stand on the bottom step for these calf toners. Hold the banister with one hand. Bend your right leg and place the toes of your left foot on the edge of the step. Let your heel drop down, press into the ball of your left foot and rise to your toes. Pause; repeat with each foot for 8 to 12 reps. **Burns 10**

**29** **Start with soup** Order a clear soup instead of a salad soaked with two tablespoons full-fat ranch and you can save twice the calories. Plus you'll feel fuller, so you'll eat less when the entrée comes. **Saves 100**

**30** **Play footsie** After dinner, while you're still sitting at the table, extend your right leg out and slowly bend it up and down, squeezing and holding in the up position for at least five seconds. Repeat on each leg five times. Sculpts quadriceps. **Burns 10**

**31** **Make perfect pasta** Substitute whole-grain pasta for semolina and you'll be satisfied with a smaller portion (1.5 ounces instead of 2). **Saves 50** Or use the same amount of oat-bran pasta. **Saves 90**



**32** **Climb up!** Taking the stairs for a total of just two minutes, five days a week, gives you the same calorie-burning results as a 20-minute walk. **Burns 100-140**

**33** **Fill up with fruit** Like pie? Here's how you can cave to the craving: Sprinkle fresh fruit—some cut-up apple, pear or a handful of cherries—with some Splenda or Equal, cover and nuke for a minute or so. Tastes just like pie filling. **Saves 275**

**34** **Have your cake** Pick up an angel food cake for dessert. It's packed with air and has fewer than half the calories of, say, pound cake. **Saves 70**



## It's Working for Me!

Debby Harry, 53, of Dallas, weighed 223 pounds when she started this approach a year and a half ago. She's lost 70 pounds so far with the help of simple lifestyle tweaks like ordering low-fat frozen yogurt instead of a chocolate shake at McDonald's, snacking on bite-size Snickers rather than the regular bars, making extra trips to the copier at work and parking as far away as possible everywhere she goes. "I feel and look great. I don't feel like I'm missing out on anything," she says.

**35** **Ease into evening** Sitting with feet uncrossed, grab your wrist and raise your hands above your head to lengthen the spine. Take a deep breath in as you reach and hold the position, breathing slowly in and out for 20 seconds, taking longer on the exhale. Instant relaxation. **Burns 5**

**36** **Get your chocolate fix** Instead of a candy bar, try a sugar-free, reduced-calorie Jell-O chocolate pudding snack with a squirt of nonfat whipped cream topping. Eat it with a baby spoon to savor it longer. **Saves 185**

**37** **Crunch for your clicker** The average half-hour TV show has eight minutes of commercials. Make reaching for the remote control worth it: Place it out of reach on the coffee table or, if you're lying down, on the opposite arm of the couch. Every time

an ad comes on and you reach for the remote, crunch until the show comes back on; you should reach 100-150 or so. Tones abs. **Burns 24**

**38** **Lift those hips** Before you tuck yourself in, lie on your back on the floor with your legs up on the edge of the bed or a chair. Slowly bend your knees, lifting your hips off the floor. Hold for five seconds, relax and repeat 10 to 12 times. Firms up hamstrings and core. **Burns 10**

## The Weekend

**39** **Sing a song** Spend Sunday morning belting it out in the church choir. **Burns 70** per service



**40** **Make it bacon** At the diner, order three slices of crisp bacon instead of two sausage links, and pat off the extra grease. **Saves 90**

**41** **Move it, Soccer Parents!** After every quarter of the game, get up from the bleachers and take a lap around the gym or field. Four or five times around a typical one is about a mile. **Burns 75**

**42** **Movie time** Most people eat 45% more popcorn from large-size containers, so make sure you get only a small and skip the butter, which adds more calories than the popcorn itself. Bring your own seasoned salt or Parmesan cheese for more flavor. **Saves 350**

**43** **Orient yourself** At Chinese restaurants, be sure to avoid anything named General Tso or Crispy, which means fried. Eat only the filling of the egg roll and not the shell. **Saves 400-500**

**44** **Catch this!** Spend a half-hour tossing a ball or Frisbee with your kid. **Burns 90**

**45** **Cut the cheese** Order your pizza with half the cheese or even cheese-less, and then sprinkle with a few tablespoons of Parmesan. **Saves 100**



**46** **Have a hot dog!** Pile on the pickles, onions and sauerkraut—these fiber-packed condiments will fill you up and prevent you from eating a second dog. Skip the cheese and chili. **Saves 250**

**47** **Think about your drink** Consider beer or wine instead of a frozen drink: A glass of regular beer has 140 calories and a serving of wine has 126 calories, while a strawberry daiquiri has about 300 and a margarita 340. **Saves 150-200**

**48** **Fix your fries** Rather than asking for medium fries, get an order of onion rings (8 to 9 rings). **Saves 60**

**49** **Scream for sorbet** Indulge in chocolate sorbet instead of chocolate ice cream. **Saves 125**

**50** **Make whoopee** Instead of a bowl of ice cream as a bedtime snack, have a robust tussle with your spouse. **Burns 300**

SOURCES: Jay Ashmore, PhD; Fabio Comana; Mara Carrico; John de Castro, PhD; Madelyn Fernstrom, PhD; Donald Hensrud, MD; James Hill, PhD; Bruce Nadler, MD; Michael Ozner, MD; Mare Petras; Barry Popkin, PhD; Barbara Rolls, PhD; Brian Wansink, PhD

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